



Windham Regional Community Council, Inc.

January 24, 2007

Jeffrey G. Beadle, Executive Director

Senator Maryann Handley
Representative Peggy Sayers
Public Health Committee

RE: Proposed Bill NO: 5076

Statement of purpose: To provide funds to the Department of Public Health to continue and expand a Fetal and Infant Mortality Program.

Dear Senator Handley and Representative Peggy Sayers,

I am writing in support of proposed bill No.5076 which will provide the funding to maintain the **Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR)** in the state of Connecticut. I am the FIMR Coordinator in the Town of Windham. This program is very successful, it is supported by the medical community in Windham and has been part of health care in Windham since 1/1/99.

The overall goal of FIMR is to enhance the health and well being of women, infants and their families through improving community resources and service delivery systems to these families. FIMR brings together key members of the community to examine information from individual cases of fetal and infant death and low birth weights. The group identifies the factors that contributed to poor birth outcomes and develops recommendations for change and assist with implementation of change.

Peristats from the March of Dimes clearly demonstrate a need for fetal/infant surveillance in Windham: **Infant Mortality Rates** in Connecticut: 6.4, in Windham 7.5

Preterm Birth Connecticut: 10.1, in Windham 10.2

Very Preterm Connecticut: 1.9, in Windham 1.6

Successful program outcomes that have been implemented include:

- Addressed issue of lack of smoke detector alarms in certain sections of Town, secured funding from Rotary Club.
- Researched culturally sensitive nutrition information for pregnant Hispanic women and distributed it to members of the CRT for their patients.
- The FIMR coordinator is working with the Dental Director at Generations and other key community people to address the unmet dental needs of pregnant women/children. Poor dental care has been linked to infections and pre term labor. Initial funding has been secured for portable dental equipment.
- A community baby shower was held June 2006. There were 50 pregnant women who attended. Information on all aspects of a healthy pregnancy was addressed.

Community providers were available to provide information about their services.

WINDHAM AIDS PROGRAM * OUTREACH SERVICES PROGRAM * WINDHAM VETERAN'S CENTER
WINDHAM YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU * YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM * WINDHAM CHILDREN'S FIRST INITIATIVE
BEYOND SHELTER * HOUSING MANAGEMENT * WINDHAM FAMILY LIVING PROGRAM * PROJECT HOME
FETAL AND INFANT MORTALITY REVIEW * WINDHAM IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM * WILLIMANTIC FARMER'S MARKET
WINDHAM HEIGHTS DAY CARE CENTER AND THE NEW HEIGHTS CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- CAT/CRT members reviewed FIMR statistics and noted that drugs/smoking were top priorities. We are working on an updated resource for all providers to have an easy access to current list for drug/substance abuse. We are partnering with the March of Dimes to provide grand rounds to educate providers.
- Our CRT recommended education about SIDS, especially in our Hispanic Community. Information is being distributed to our community Spanish Churches, grandparent groups, and clinics
- Addressed issues and system protocols regarding maternal substance use/abuse, hepatitis, mental health issues, statutory rape, teens and the law, teen pregnancy, DCF referral process and provided community trainings at Windham Hospital for providers
- Coordinated and developed a system to ensure VNA postpartum referrals from Hospital to VNA.
- Developed universal pregnancy screening tool to be utilized by all community services to ensure referral to prenatal care.
- Addressed issues of lack of Spanish speaking outreach workers in the community.
- Coordinated and developed system to address lack of maternal six-week follow-up postpartum visits to provider. This process is in the process of being refined by discussions with managed care liaisons.
- Distributed STD information to providers and addressed issues of partner testing and notification.
- Addressed and reviewed York Correctional Institute protocols for follow-up upon the release of pregnant women to the community. Coordinated with HIV Outreach Services, DCF and Prison system.
- Developed and distributed list of bereavement resources for grieving parents, including a list of faith-based resources in Spanish/English.
- Secured two years of funding from the March of Dimes for implementation of Outreach in Windham to address issues of safe, healthy pregnancies, unplanned pregnancy, lack of prenatal care, maternal substance use and abuse.
- Secured 2 grants to continue implementation of outreach programs to address issues of safe pregnancies. We have partnered with Planned Parenthood and WIC to provide education.
- Women that were interviewed stated they were unaware of the signs of preterm labor. A grant was secured and magnets were made and distributed to providers/community.

❖ At a minimal funding level, the Windham FIMR Program acts as a catalyst of change and has proven to be a successful program, which has led to the overall improvement in the maternal infant health care delivery system for the Town of Windham. We are requesting the continuation of our 5 FIMR programs and to expand FIMR into other high- risk areas.

Thank you for your consideration
Lynda Stein M.S.W, Windham FIMR Coordinator

Lynda Stein